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ABSTRACT

Divided into sections on the reading process, positive effects of literature in a reading program, and basic instructional elements of a literature-based reading program, this 39-item annotated bibliography of journal articles and monographs dating back to 1968 presents research concerning the use of literature in the reading curriculum. An extensive summary of the literature, a conclusion arguing for the inclusion of children's literature in reading instruction, and four recommendations follow the annotated bibliography. (A 46-item bibliography is attached.) (RS)

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An Annotated Bibliography Reviewing Research Dealing with the Use of Children's Literature in a Reading Program

By

Marcia E. Kindy

Graduate Student

Study Directed

by

Charles R. DuVall, Ph.D.

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements

for the course E591 - - - Exit Project

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INTRODUCTION

In many elementary classrooms, commercial reading programs (Basal readers) make up the entire reading curriculum (Hill, 1985). The programs break up reading into isolated, fragmented skills. As children master these skills through workbooks and worksheets, they are thought of as "successful readers" (White, Vaughan, and Rorie, 1986).

As a result of emphasis on isolated skills, many children have lost the enjoyment and self-motivation of reading. Children have also ignored many meaningful contexts and have difficulty with higher level reading comprehension (White, Vaughan, and Rorie, 1986).

Huck, a Professor of Early and Middle Childhood Education at The Ohio State University, contends that reading motivation and desire come from literature--not skills. She states that literature should be the content of a reading program. Literature is filled with feeling, imagination and new views of the world which are natural parts of a child's world (Huck, 1977).

As the desire and motivation for reading are heightened, the child will read more and more. According to Smith, children learn to read by experiencing reading (Smith, 1979).

Reading is not made up of isolated skills, but rather a process by which comprehension is gained. Goodman states that reading is a constant search for meaning (Goodman, 1974).

With these thoughts about literature and reading in mind, children's literature seems to be a valuable tool for reading instruction in the elementary classroom. It is the intent of this paper to review recent research where literature has been used for reading instruction and synthesize the outcomes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As the goal of reading instruction is to develop competent, lifetime readers who enjoy reading, it would follow that the use of children's literature would be a more intriguing means of teaching reading for elementary children than the strict use of the basal reader.

ORGANIZATION

This study is organized in the form of an annotated bibliography of the research dealing with the use of children's literature for reading instruction. The annotations have been arranged alphabetically under the headings and subheadings of each section.

The three major headings of this research are: the reading process, positive effects of literature in a reading program, and basic instructional elements of a literature-based reading program. Each of these major headings are further divided into subheadings.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The investigation was restricted by a time limitation and the availability of several resources. Longitudinal studies on the topic were also unavailable. This study is not exhaustive, however, the premise was supported and further reading and study has been encouraged through this initial study.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms and definitions may be helpful to the reader and promote a stronger understanding of the research and material presented.

basal reader- a textbook, usually part of a graded series, used for instruction in reading. (Good: 472)

comprehension- the act of understanding the meaning of printed or spoken language as contrasted with the ability to perceive and pronounce words without reference to their meaning. (Good: 123)

language- a code for conveying the thoughts and feelings of one individual to another which has been accepted and is mutually understood by both; maybe oral, through the articulation of vocal sounds into words and the grouping of words into statements; maybe written, through an arrangement of symbols roughly approximating the sounds that one makes in speaking. (Good: 328)

linguistic- the pattern of a language system. (Good: 341)

literacy- the ability to read and write. (Good: 342)

literature- published reading material of a superior quality written for children by expert writers. (Good: 342)

literature-based program- planned procedures in providing learning experiences in literature for pupils at a given level. (Good: 446)

mastery learning- an instructional procedure recommended for securing mastery of subject matter and defined as "pre-test, teach, test the result, adapt procedure, teach and test again to the point of actual learning." (Good: 352)

reader- a person who reads. (Random House: 1606)

reading achievement- attainment in any of a number of reading skills, habits, attitudes; usually estimated by performance on some criterion measure such as formal or informal reading tests, or by grade levels. (Good: 7)

schemata- an underlying organizational pattern or structure. (Random House: 1713)

skills- anything that the individual has learned to do with ease and precision; a mental performance. (Good: 537)

strategies- a plan, method, or series of maneuvers or stratagems for obtaining a specific goal or result. (Random House: 1880)

syntax- the area of grammatical study dealing with sentence structure and word relations as established by usage. (Good: 579)

ANNOTATIONS

THE READING PROCESS

ORAL LANGUAGE

Chomsky, Carol, "Stages in Language Development and Reading Exposure," Harvard Educational Review, February, 1972, 42:1-33.

Thirty-six children in kindergarten through fourth grade were used in this study to examine the relationship between language competence and the acquisition of English syntax. From the study, the author indicated there is a definite sequence in language and syntax acquisition from simple to complex, and that the rate varies greatly from child to child. The study also compared the rate of language development with exposure to written language. The author found there is a direct correlation between the amount of reading exposure and language development.

Cohen, Dorothy H., "The Effect of Literature on Vocabulary and Reading Achievement," Elementary English, February, 1968, 45:209-213.

This study was designed to determine if reading literature aloud to second grade children would increase their vocabulary, deepen their desire to read, and increase their reading achievement. One hundred fifty-five were in the experimental group. The control group classes continued as before with the teachers reading aloud occasionally. The experimental group classes had the teachers reading aloud daily with an appropriate follow-up activity. The Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test and the Free Association Vocabulary test were given in October and in June using different forms. The results of the study indicated that the experimental group did significantly increase in vocabulary, word knowledge, and comprehension over the control group. There was no significant difference in word discrimination. The implications of this study show that reading aloud to children does help facilitate the transition from comprehending oral language to the beginning stages of comprehending the written symbols of reading. There is a relationship between oral language and reading.

Goodman, Kenneth, "Effective Teachers of Reading Know Language and Children," Elementary English, September, 1974, 51:823-828.

This article was designed to inform the reader that children possess natural language resources because of their oral language learning. By understanding and building on this language competence, literacy can be seen as an extension of the natural language learning of children. Language is an arbitrary and abstract code used to meet the needs of communication. The motivation in all language learning is successful communication. Just as children learn oral language as a whole and within a context of meaning, so reading language should be learned also, rather than attempting to teach reading by having children learn isolated and fragmented skills.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Goodman, Yetta M., "Retellings of Literature and the Comprehension Process," Theory into Practice, Fall, 1982, 21:300-307.

The author relates how "retellings" of literature give insights into a reader's comprehension processes. Comprehending is a process of trying to make sense of a given text. Comprehension is what the reader understands the text to mean. The reader uses background knowledge to predict the decoding of the written organization of the written text. The more a reader's own life experience is relevant to the text content, the greater the predictability and the easier the comprehension. The differences in "retellings" and comprehension are due to the schemata and experiences the reader brings to the text. The more background knowledge, the better the prediction, comprehension, and "retelling."

Pearson, David P., and Robert J. Tierney, "Toward a Composing Model of Reading," Language Arts, May, 1983, 60:568-580.

The authors of this article described the composing process of the reader to derive meaning from the written text. The words on a page have no meaning until the reader decides there is meaning. The reader uses his prior knowledge to interpret the text so that it fulfills the goals of the reader. The underlying goal of the reader is to make sense of what is happening in the text; therefore, the reader uses prior knowledge to fill in the missing links. As the reader composes meaning, there are continuous and recurring transactions taking place between the reader and the writer so that each of their goals and desires are perceived.

White, Jane H., Joseph L. Vaughan, and I. Laverne Rorie, "Picture of a Classroom Where Reading is for Real," The Reading Teacher, October, 1986, 4:84-86.

Twenty-five first graders from a lower to lower middle socio-economic background were observed throughout the year in a rural school district. The walls of the classroom were covered with print, the children wrote in daily journals, and read them to each other. During the daily read-aloud storytime, the children asked questions, chose the books to be read, discussed the characters, predicted outcomes, and wrote new endings. These children were forming an understanding of themselves as readers and learning the reading process as it is in the real world. They were in control of their own reading, its purpose, its pace, and even the procedure itself. They were actively using prior knowledge and making sense of written text. When given the standardized test scores in the spring, twenty students had grade equivalent scores of second grade and above.

PURPOSE

Duffy, Gerald G., and Laura R. Roehler, "Teaching Reading Skills as Strategies," The Reading Teacher, January, 1987, 40:414-418.

The authors reviewed recent research and concluded that reading is not the unconscious use of a set of skills. Instead, good readers use strategies. The strategies are plans that are flexible and adaptable to the situation. Pre-reading strategies use prior knowledge of the topic, the author's purpose, and the readers' own purposes to predict the text content. Repair strategies are used during reading when meaning is blocked (example--an unknown word). The strategic reader has been taught thoughtful and conscious reasoning about problems in written text. The strategic reader knows how to reason adaptively with his knowledge about how reading works.

McClure, Amy A., "Integrating Children's Fiction and Informational Literature in a Primary Reading Curriculum," The Reading Teacher, April, 1982, 35:784-788.

The author maintained that an underlying assumption of the reading process is that children have a natural curiosity about the world they live in and will read to satisfy that curiosity. To take advantage of that natural curiosity, the author concluded that a reading program needs to keep in mind that the reader derives meaning from the text; therefore, the reader needs to be the central focus when finding materials for reading. The materials should be of interest to the reader and have a natural format (not controlled vocabulary).

Smith, Frank, "Learning to Read by Reading," Language Arts, March, 1976, 53:297-299, 322.

The purpose of this case study was to demonstrate that the world of children can be filled with meaningful print, that children know how to learn, and that they search for something to learn. Matthew, a 3 1/2 year old child from a middle-class family, was taken to a supermarket, a department store, and given a book. His responses to print were filmed and observed. The results indicated that Matthew was aware of print and that he made sense of it when it was in a meaningful context. He also demonstrated that he knew how to learn without an adult telling him how. The author generalized that children can scarcely be prevented from learning if they want to learn and that the teaching of the mechanics of reading are unnecessary to the child's ability to make sense of the printed word.

Smith, Frank, "The Language Arts and the Learner's Mind," Language Arts, February, 1979, 56:118-125.

The four categories of Language Arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) are not separate stages nor do they require different levels of cognitive development. Language needs to make sense to children and they need to understand the purpose and intentions of the language or they will fail to learn from it. Children relate what is new to something that is already known. Children see words in print as having a purpose. The purpose being the relationship of the word to the context of the written message. This context determines the meaningfulness of each word. A child's ability to comprehend written texts, such as literature, depends on prior familiarity with such written language. Familiarity can be gained by reading to the child.

Winograd, Peter, and Lynne A. Smith, "Improving the Climate for Reading Comprehension Instruction," The Reading Teacher, December, 1987, 41:304-310.

The authors reviewed recent research on reading in which they examined attitudes that need to be changed about teaching reading. The authors found that reading is viewed as being successful or unsuccessful by achievement test scores which measure skills. The authors believed that reading success should rather be determined by the meaning derived or the pleasure gained from the process of reading. The authors also found that the purpose of reading is competitive among students to gain assignment to a certain group rather than reading for their own enjoyment, goals, and purposes. Lastly, the authors found teachers to be preoccupied with following the sequence of the teacher's manual rather than building rapport among students and sharing the pleasure of reading with them.

LITERATURE

Harker, Dr. W. John, "Children's Literature and Back to the Basics," Reading Horizons, Spring, 1980, 20:159-164.

The author of this article stated that in order for children to grow and develop in the area of linguistic awareness, they must be immersed in literature. Oral language activities, allowing the child to choose the literature, and discussing the literature read are all ways of enhancing this linguistic awareness. The more experience a child has with deriving meaning through the interacation of his own experiences with those experiences represented on the written page, the greater will be the child's understanding and enjoyment of reading. The child will become a better reader by reading.

Huck, Charlotte S., "Literature as the Content of Reading," Theory Into Practice, December, 1977, 16:363-371.

This author stated that she supports the views of Frank Smith and Kenneth Goodman in that the reading process is a constant search for meaning and that children learn to read by experience in reading. Reading must also give the intrinsic reward of personal satisfaction to the reader. The author contends that literature allows the child to experience joy in reading. Also that literature has the power to influence the "feeling" side of life and that it allows the imagination to stretch. Literature is able to entertain as well as to educate. Use of literature in the reading program can help children become fluent satisfied readers.

Koeller, Shirley, "25 Years Advocating Children's Literature in the Reading Program," The Reading Teacher, February, 1981, 34:552-556.

The author presented a review of 25 years of the journal, The Reading Teacher. Recurring themes in elementary reading programs were basal reader systems versus individualized reading instruction; group reading instruction versus one-to-one instruction; teacher reliance on the textbook as the major resource for instruction; and round robin oral reading. Educational achievements were: emphasis on thinking skills, comprehension, and response to literature; concern for racism, sexism, ageism; and learning disabilities. Reading experts throughout the 25 years have desired reading to become a hobby; however, it hasn't happened. From the evidence of the past 25 years, it becomes apparent that children be allowed to choose their own books, teachers be insightful and flexible, teachers read aloud, many literary quality books be available, children share books with each other, and children react to and express ideas through art, drama, puppets, discussion, music, and writing.

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF LITERATURE IN A READING PROGRAM

ACHIEVEMENT

Crowell, Doris C. "Preventing Summer Loss of Reading Skills Among Primary Children," The Reading Teacher, February, 1981, 34:561-564.

This study was designed to see if primary children could be encouraged to read over the summer and if this reading would help maintain their reading skills during the summer months. Fifty low income, first and second grade children from Hawaii were ranked and then assigned alternately to two groups--the treatment group and the comparison (control) group. A different recreational reading book (at the appropriate reading level for each child) was mailed weekly to each of the children in the treatment group for ten weeks. The comparison group received no books. The Gates MacGinitie Reading Test was given as a pretest in the spring and a different form was given again in September as a posttest. The results indicated significant gains in vocabulary for the treatment group. No significant differences were found in comprehension between the two groups.

Eldredge, J. Lloyd, and Dennis Butterfield, Testing The Sacred Cows in Reading, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 255 861, December, 1984, 93 p.

Six randomly selected second grade classrooms from the same school district were selected to be in an experimental program using literature as the source for reading rather than the basal reader. 104 children's paperback literature books were used. Control classrooms used the basal reader. Pre- and posttests were administered to all experimental and control classrooms. The results indicated that children using the literature books made greater vocabulary gains, greater reading achievement gains, greater phonics gains, and greater gains in reading interest scores than children using basals. One conclusion that can be made on the basis of this study is that children taught to read by using children's literature books will achieve better than children that are taught to read using basal materials. These children will also be more interested in reading and like reading more.

Gambrell, Linda B., and Carol Sokolski, "Picture Potency: Use Caldecott Award Books to Develop Children's Language," The Reading Teacher, May, 1983, 36:868-871.

The authors referred to a research study on basal reader illustrations which concluded that basal pictures are poor facilitators of oral language stimulation. (Legenza and Knafle, 1978) Gambrell and Sokolski used the same Manzo-Legenza formula as the mentioned basal study to determine the oral language stimulation value of 20 randomly chosen Caldecott winning books. Their findings were that 10 of the Caldecott Award books had high picture potency ratings, nine had medium picture potency ratings, and only one had a low picture potency rating. The authors stated that "Caldecott winners provide an excellent source of pictures for stimulating oral language." The authors also gave suggestions for instructional use.

Hiebert, Elfrieda H., "A Comparison of Young Children's Self-selected Reading Words and Basal Reading Words," Reading Improvement, Spring, 1983, 20:41-44.

The purpose of this study was to compare basal words to self-selected words of fourteen pre-schoolers attending a daycare facility. The self-selected words tended to be multi-syllabic while the basal words were mostly one syllable. Other differences were found in grapheme-phoneme patterns, syntactic function, and semantic features between the basal and self-selected words. The author stated that differences may be due to the fact that basal words are often chosen because of high frequency usage, while the self-selected words were chosen for personal meaningfulness to the individual child, as are oral words. The author of the study questioned the value of controlled vocabulary in teaching reading as opposed to meaningful concrete words.

Sallee, Ellen R., and Renuka R. Sethi, "Effects of Adding Folklore to Basal Reading Programs," Reading Horiozons, Fall, 1984, 25:31-37.

The purpose of this study was to show that second graders' reading achievement would significantly increase when folklore was added to their basal reading program. Forty-nine children were randomly selected to be in a control group or an experimental group. The California Achievement Test, Forms A and B, were given as pre- and posttests. The children's interests were determined and used to select reading materials for the experimental group. The control group used their regular basal reading program plus additional time spent with the basal. The experimental group used their regular basal reading program plus folklore. The results indicated that the use of folklore along with a basal reading program did significantly improve reading comprehension of the second graders in this study.

DESIRE

Belloni, Loretta Frances, and Eugene A. Jongsma, "The Effects of Interest on Reading Comprehension of Low-Achieving Students," Journal of Reading, November, 1978, 22:106-109.

A sample of fifty, low achieving seventh grade students were randomly selected in order to assess whether reading interest influenced reading comprehension. The students chose one most-interesting story and one least-interesting story to read. The readability levels of these stories were higher than the reading levels of the students. After the students read their stories, they were given a 250 word cloze test over the story. Results of the study indicated that these low-achieving seventh grade students comprehended the most-interesting material better than the least-interesting material. The authors also pointed out that these materials were above the students' readability levels. Implications from this study indicate that interest needs to be considered in the areas of testing, instruction, and leisure reading.

Estes, Thomas H., and Joseph L. Vaughan, Jr., "Reading Interest and Comprehension: Implications," The Reading Teacher, November, 1973, 27:149-153.

Forty-six fourth grade children were the subjects of a study designed to determine the effects of a child's interest on reading comprehension of a given passage. Six passages of text were chosen (folk tales, animals, sports, space, mystery, and foreign lands). A Dale-Chall readability grade placement score was determined for each passage falling in the range of 5.4 to 5.6. An informal reading inventory was also administered to each participating student. Each child chose a passage of highest interest and one of lowest interest. A comprehension check consisting of 10 questions measured the retention of facts, inferences, main ideas, and vocabulary of each chosen passage. The study indicated that interest was an important factor in improved reading comprehension. The results also implied that interest may be as important a factor in reading comprehension as is difficulty of a passage.

Green, Georgia M., and Margaret S. Olsen, Preferences for and Comprehension of Original and Readability-Adapted Materials, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 281 181, November, 1986, 58 p.

A study was completed in a small, central Illinois school using 58 second grade children. The study attempted to evaluate whether children preferred unadapted stories or stories that had been adapted using a readability formula and whether these adapted stories are really easier to understand. Results showed that children preferred the unadapted stories and that no significant difference in children's comprehension score was found. Since children prefer unadapted materials, and they are no more difficult, the author suggested that there is no educational motive for using adapted materials.

Morrow, Lesley Mandel, "Promoting Innercity Children's Recreational Reading," The Reading Teacher, December, 1987, 41:266-274.

One hundred thirty, six to eight year old, lower socio-economic children in New York City participated in this study. The study was conducted in four summer recreational daycare centers for a period of nine weeks. The daycare centers were equipped with well designed library corners and trained teachers presented regularly scheduled literature activities. Data was collected and recorded by teachers. At the end of the nine weeks, the author found the students did increase their book use as well as their enthusiasm for books.

ATTITUDE

Berg-Cross, Linda, and Gary Berg-Cross, "Listening to Stories May Change Children's Social Attitudes," The Reading Teacher, March, 1978, 31:659-66.

One hundred twenty white middle class children from four to six years of age were used in this study to determine if hearing popular, socially relevant story books would influence any attitude or value changes. The experimental group had picture books expressing social values read to them individually while the control group had books with no social values read to them. Pre- and posttests were given after each story. The control groups made little changes in attitude from pre- to posttest, while the experimental groups did show changes in attitude from pre- to post-testing. From the results, the authors concluded that the attitudes and values of four to six year old children can be significantly influenced and changed by hearing picture books read to them that express different attitudes or values from their own.

Chomsky, Carol, "After Decoding, What?" Language Arts, March, 1976, 53:288-296.

Five 8-year old children who were the slowest readers in their class and making no progress in reading were used for this project. Chomsky labeled them as passive readers, not actively participating in the reading process. Chomsky's purpose was to capture their attention, regarding reading, and get them to become active readers. Memorization of books of their choice that had been taped was the technique used. After successfully memorizing books for four months, the children gained confidence and began reading new books on their own. Memorized books may not be viewed by some as "real" reading, but transfer did take place for these children into new materials as reported by their teachers and parents. The children picked up books voluntarily and read them. They began writing more and had pride in their reading. They became active participants in reading rather than passive. The underlying positive factor in this study was the built-in feature of success. Failure was not possible and the children finally could read.

D'Angelo, Karen, "Biblio-Power: Promoting Reading and Writing with Books," Reading Psychology, October/December, 1982, 3:347-354.

Biblio-power is the invisible influence of books that helps the reader develop positive attitudes and values about reading and writing. This study sought to identify books that presented the value of reading and writing within their plots or stories. The author identified two Caldecott and sixteen Newberry Medal books that focused on positive aspects of reading and writing. These books had the potential to develop positive attitudes and values about reading and writing when the child read, personally reacted to, and became involved with the characters, themes, and plots of the books.

Rasinski, Timothy V., and Diane E. DeFord, Learning Within a Classroom Context: First Graders Conceptions of Literacy, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 262 393, November, 1985, pp. 1-25.

Children in three separate first grade classrooms were the subjects in this study to examine the effects of three different literacy learning models on conceptions held about reading and writing. The results of the study showed that the type of reading and writing instruction did affect the child's conceptions of reading and writing. The mastery learning and the basal-based classroom generated analytical and surface level responses while the literature-based classroom generated holistic and meaning based responses. The author conjectured that children who develop a meaning-based attitude toward reading may be the adults who find reading to have personal meaning and value.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL ELEMENTS IN A LITERATURE-BASED READING PROGRAM

READING ALOUD

Bridge, Connie A., Peter N. Winograd, and Darliene Haley, "Using Predictable Materials vs. Preprimers to Teach Beginning Sight Words," The Reading Teacher, May, 1982, 36:884-891.

Sixteen first grade children whose scores did not differ significantly on the Metropolitan Readiness Test were chosen for this study. The experimental group was read to by the teacher and then the group read aloud using predictable materials while the control group used preprimers from a basal series following the teacher's manual for instruction. The purpose of the study was to compare sight word vocabulary, strategies used for unknown words, and attitudes toward reading. Pretests and posttests were given for each of the three mentioned areas. After the four weeks of instruction, the experimental group learned significantly more sight vocabulary and non-sight vocabulary words than did the control group. The experimental group also relied more on context clues and had more positive feelings about reading aloud than did the control group.

Combs, Martha, "Modeling the Reading Process with Enlarged Texts," The Reading Teacher, January, 1987, 40:422-27.

The purpose of this study was to determine the responses of 24 kindergarten children to reading aloud to them using a traditional approach versus a modeled approach. The traditional approach consisted of the teacher reading a book aloud with emphasis on enjoyment. The modeled approach consisted of the teacher reading aloud for enjoyment plus modeling aspects of the reading process using enlarged versions of the books. Children were interviewed and observed. After a 3-week period, the children in the modeled approach showed significant gains in comprehension and free recall over those in the traditional approach. The average and below average children had made the largest gains. The modeled approach also produced more enthusiasm and participation in discussions. The implications of this study are that an important first step in learning to read is the need to be comfortable with written language in an oral context.

Lamme, Linda Leonard, "Reading Aloud to Children," Language Arts, November/December, 1976, 53:886-888.

Sixty-three pre-school, kindergarten, and first and second grade teachers in North Central Florida were used in this study to create an instrument to measure how well a teacher is reading aloud to a group of children. Videotaping was used and then analyzed using a preliminary form of Reading Aloud to Children Scale (RACS). Eight of the RACS items contributed substantially to the quality of the oral reading performance. Those eight items were involving the child through choral reading or prediction, having eye contact, putting expression into words, pointing to words and pictures, teacher being familiar with the text, variable voice quality, selecting quality illustrated books, and high-lighting the words and language of the story. The author stated that children's attitudes toward literature were influenced by the ways in which adults read to them.

FREE CHOICE

Chandler, Judy, and Marcia Baghban, "Predictable Books Guarantee Success," Reading Horizons, April, 1986, 26:167-173.

This study consisted of two groups of children from each of grades one, two, and three. The control groups used their basal readers and the sequential, step-by-step pattern of the basal series was followed. The experimental group used predictable books of their own choosing and reading aloud and discussing the books were part of the daily routine. All children in the study scored below the 40th percentile on the Metropolitan Readiness Test prior to this study. The children took the reading and language sections of the Metropolitan Achievement Test at the appropriate grade level as a posttest. The test results showed the experimental group improved significantly over the control group. Implications from this study indicate that predictable books are a resource for the teaching of reading and writing without teaching a step-by-step reading method.

Pieronek, Florence T., "Do Basal Readers Reflect the Interests of Intermediate Students?" The Reading Teacher, June, 1980, 33:408-411.

Research of the past 20 years which pertained to the reading interests of intermediate students was reviewed and analyzed. Nine reading interests were identified. These findings were then used to determine if the eight basal reading series examined reflected these nine known interests. The nine categories of interest were not equally represented in the basal readers examined. The data collected, however, did indicate that current basal readers (copyrights of 1971-80), with a few exceptions, did reflect reasonably well the reading interests of intermediate children. However, the author indicated that the basal reader should not be expected to reflect all the interests of all children, and teachers need to be responsible for supplementing basal reading programs with materials that meet individual interests and needs.

Robeck, Carol P., "Using Trade Books To Increase The Effectiveness of a Reading Program," Reading Psychology, October/December, 1982, 3:355-363.

The author of this article reviewed recent research and concluded that reading is a process that communicates information. Reading is not just knowing a series of skills. Children who have been given the opportunity to read for enjoyment and to participate in literature appreciation activities tend to show more reading growth than those who have not been given this opportunity. Incorporating reading for enjoyment also allows for free-choice of reading material, which in turn meets the personal interests of the child.

Tovey, Duane R., Lynn G. Johnson, and Micheal Szporer, "Remedying 'The 180° Syndrome' in Reading," Childhood Education, October, 1986, 63:11-15.

The authors reviewed research on the process and teaching of reading. They concluded that reading is integrated with the reader's thinking and language. They contend that letters and words alone are not language, but when placed in a meaningful context and processed along with the reader's language, the letters and words become meaningful to the reader. They also pointed out that the reader learns to read by reading or being read to. They stated that the reader brings meaning to the print and that the reader enjoys reading more and becomes more proficient at reading if he has a choice in selecting the materials to be read.

DISCUSSION

Hansell, T. Stevenson, "Observations of Interpretive Reading Discussions in Sixth and Eighth Grades," Journal of Reading, November, 1984, 28:118-121.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether sixth and eighth grade students were capable of interpretive reading and discussion of works of literature. There were two experimental groups and one control group. The discussion procedures used were those promoted by the Great Books Foundation. Data was collected through videotapes and analyzed by using the Critical Reading Scale. The results indicated that 75% of the responses fall into the higher level thinking skills categories of interpretation and evaluation. Age did not influence the performance in this type of discussion. The author also contends that willing sixth and eighth graders can and will examine literature in depth.

Hill, Susan E., "Children's Individual Responses and Literature Conferences in the Elementary School," The Reading Teacher, January, 1985, 38:382-386.

This case study of four elementary children in grades five and six, involved in a literature-based reading program, examined their responses to literature through individual conferences with their teacher. The children represented a wide range of interests and reading abilities. They chose their own books. The author of this study concluded that the discussions with the better readers were focused on literary analysis and personal response while the struggling reader focused only on content recall. All the children showed a love for literature. The better readers experienced language enrichment from the books and from discussions with the teacher. The struggling reader did not experience this enrichment.

Hoskisson, Kenneth, and Donald S. Biskin, "Analyzing and Discussing Children's Literature Using Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development," The Reading Teacher, November, 1979, 33:141-147.

The author presented the stages of moral development described by Lawrence Kohlberg. These stages were then applied in analyzing a piece of literature with a moral issue. Discussion was used to help children think about the moral judgements made in the story. The literature provided a safe and nonthreatening environment for the children. Through this process the children became aware of moral thinking and were encouraged to progress to higher stages of moral development.

SUSTAINED SILENT READING

Evans, Howard M., and John C. Towner, "Sustained Silent Reading: Does it Increase Skills?" The Reading Teacher, November, 1975, 29:155-156.

Forty-eight children from two fourth grade classrooms were used for this ten-week study to determine if sustained silent reading leads to skill development equal to or superior to that which was obtained from commercial practice materials. One-half of the children in each classroom were assigned to sustained silent reading while the other half of the children were assigned to commercial practice materials. Pre- and posttests were administered to all children. The results of the tests indicated that no significant differences were found between the use of sustained silent reading and commercial materials with fourth graders in a ten-week period. The authors implied that sustained silent reading is a more natural form of practice since it involves the total act of reading.

Hill, Charles H. and Kathleen Methot, "Making an Important Transition," Elementary English, September, 1974, 51:842-845.

Eighteen economically disadvantaged and/or culturally deprived first grade children from Garfield Elementary School were chosen for this study. These children had been using a programmed workbook-oriented beginning reading program. The purpose of this study was to see if these children could make a transition to an individualized reading program using only trade books and one-to-one teacher conferencing. Group one included the top nine children in the classroom while Group two included the bottom nine children in the classroom. At the conclusion of six weeks, the authors found that the transition was made with a minimum of stress and all of the children showed growth but one. Sustained silent reading was one of the behaviors endorsed and observed while making the transition. The authors indicated that first grade children could sustain silent reading for twenty minutes.

SUMMARY

Using the research literature available or their own research, several authors have attempted to clarify the process of reading. Oral language has been shown to have a direct relationship with reading (Cohen, 1968 and Chomsky, 1972). The findings of Chomsky (1972) indicated that children learn oral language in a sequential manner from simple to complex and a similar sequence is transferred over to written language learning. Goodman (1974) concluded that reading is a natural extension of the oral language resources the child already owns.

As children develop their oral language, they become aware that communication is the purpose of oral language. When children are exposed to written language through being read to, they soon realize that written language also has the purpose of communicating (Goodman, 1974).

In order for written language to communicate, the reader has to give meaning to the written symbols (Pearson and Tierney, 1983). The reader uses prior knowledge and experiences to predict and decode what the symbols on the page mean (Pearson and Tierney, 1983 and Goodman, 1982). Goodman (1982) indicated that the more a reader's own prior knowledge or experience is relevant to the written language, the greater the predictability

and comprehension of that written language.

McClure (1982) indicated that children are naturally curious about the world they live in and they will read to satisfy that curiosity. The findings of White, Vaughan, and Rorie (1986) support McClure's statement. They found when children were surrounded by print, they were actively using prior knowledge to make sense of that print. Smith (1976) also demonstrated through a case study that when a 3-1/2 year old boy was immersed in print, he made sense of the print which was in a meaningful context. Winograd and Smith (1987), Smith (1979), and McClure (1982) all concluded that written language must have a purpose for the reader in order for it to be meaningful to the reader.

Winograd and Smith (1987) indicated that the success of reading is not measured by test scores but by successfully deriving meaning by the reader. According to Duffy and Roehler (1987) reading is not an unconscious use of skills, but rather a process of applying flexible and adaptable strategies to the written language.

When the oral language resources, prior knowledge, and a purpose for reading are all combined in the reader's mind, the process of reading occurs. Harker (1980) contends that for children to grow and develop in the areas of oral and written language, they must be immersed in literature. Literature, according to Huck (1977) is entertaining as well as educational,

has the power to influence the feeling side of life, allows the imagination to stretch, and allows children to experience joy in reading.

Koeller (1981) reviewed 25 years of The Reading Teacher journal. She found that the long-term goal of reading in that time period was that reading become a hobby. Koeller supports the use of literature in trying to attain this long-term goal.

A study conducted by Eldredge and Butterfield (1984) found there were significant gains in vocabulary and reading achievement for those children using literature as the source for reading instruction rather than the basal reader. Crowell (1981) conducted a study where children were given literature books to read over summer vacation and found that those children showed significant gains in vocabulary. Children using folklore literature in addition to their basal readers showed significant gains in comprehension over those children that used basal readers only according to Sallee and Sethi (1984).

Gambrell and Sokolski (1983) referred to a study that found basal readers to be poor facilitators of oral language. They then conducted a study to determine the language stimulation of Caldecott Award books and found these books to be excellent sources for stimulating oral language.

Hiebert's (1983) study compared basal words to self-selected words. The self-selected words were more difficult and more

interesting than the words in the basal readers. Hiebert thus questioned the validity of controlled vocabulary as is found in basal readers.

One of the goals of reading instruction is for children to have a desire to read. The use of literature has been shown to have positive effects on children's desire to read as indicated by the following studies.

In two separate studies conducted by Estes and Vaughan (1973) and Belloni and Jongsma (1978), children were instructed to choose a most-interesting story and a least-interesting story to read. The results showed when children read the most-interesting stories (or most desired stories), their comprehension improved when compared to the comprehension of the least-interesting story.

In another study conducted by Morrow (1987) literature was readily available and teachers presented regularly scheduled literature activities. At the conclusion of the study, it was demonstrated that the children increased their desire and enthusiasm for books. Children have also shown preference for unadapted stories found in literature books over adapted stories found in basal readers (Green and Olsen, 1986).

Several studies have found literature to have an influence on children's attitudes. Rasinski and Deford (1985) indicated that children using literature for reading instruction rather

than basal readers or a mastesry learning program, developed a meaning-based attitude toward reading. D'Angelo (1982) found certain literature books had an invisible influence on the reader. The books were indirectly presenting the value of reading and resulted in developing positive attitudes toward reading in the children participating in this study. In a study conducted by Berg-Cross and Berg-Cross (1978) children's attitudes and values were significantly influenced and changed by exposure to literature.

Chomsky (1976) used memorization of literature with children who were not reading successfully. She worked with them until they experienced success. Once success was experienced, and confidence gained, the children started reading books on their own. The children now had a positive attitude toward reading.

A number of researchers have attempted to define basic instructional elements needed in a literature-based program. Lamme (1976) and Combs (1987) conducted studies that support reading aloud as an essential element. Lamme (1976) found that children's attitudes toward literature were influenced when read to. Bridge, Winograd, and Haley (1982) found when children had predictable books read to them, they developed positive feelings toward literature and their vocabulary increased. Combs (1987) determined when children were read to they showed significant gains in comprehension and their enthusiasm for books increased.

Allowing children to choose the literature books they read appears to be beneficial according to several studies. Pieronek (1980) determined from her study that basal readers do not always reflect the interests of the reader. She further implied that children need to be given the priviledge of choosing their own books to fulfill their personal interests. Robeck (1982) concluded that children who are given a free choice of books to read develop an enjoyment for reading as well as satisfy their personal interests. Chandler and Baghban (1986) found when children were allowed to choose their own books, were read to, and discussed the books, their reading and language scores improved significantly over those children who were using basal readers. Tovey, Johson, and Szporer (1986) concluded that when children have a choice in selecting their books to read, they enjoy reading more and become more proficient readers.

Discussion of literature is another basic element in a literature program. Hoskisson and Biskin (1979) incorporated Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development with the discussion of literature. The authors proported that through discussion of literature, children become aware of moral issues, and this awareness followed by discussion can facilitate children's progress to higher stages of moral development.

Hansell (1984) conducted a study in which he found children were capable of discussing literature and they tended to use

interpretation and evaluation, which are higher level thinking skills. Hill (1985) also found that children who were discussing literature used the higher level thinking skills of analysis and interpretation along with experiencing language enrichment.

Sustained silent reading is seen as having value by Hill and Methot (1974) and Evans and Towner (1975). Hill and Methot (1974) found when children were placed in an individualized reading program using literature and also incorporating sustained silent reading, they exhibited growth in their reading ability. These first grade children were able to sustain silent reading for twenty minutes. In the study conducted by Evans and Towner (1975) sustained silent reading was viewed as a natural form of practicing the process of reading.

CONCLUSIONS

The research concluded that written language and oral language are natural processes which are learned for the common purpose of communicating a meaningful message. Several researchers indicated that when written language was being read, the reader processed prior knowledge and experiences, tried to determine the purpose, used his/her oral language resources, made predictions, and made interpretations until the written language had meaning to the reader.

The research also pointed out that children (the readers) have a natural curiosity to discover and learn new information. Reading was suggested as being one avenue children use to satisfy that curiosity and literature seems to be an appropriate source of reading material. Literature was described as being enjoyable, full of imagination, informational, and having a natural flow of language.

Academic achievements in the areas of vocabulary, comprehension, and oral language were made when literature was used for reading instruction. Research indicated that the use of literature developed positive attitudes toward reading and increased the desire to read. Attitude and desire may well be two elements necessary in developing the life-long habit of reading.

To incorporate literature into a reading program it became apparent from the research that certain basic instructional elements were necessary. Reading aloud was shown to be desirable because it generated positive feelings toward reading, increased vocabulary, and modeled the natural flow of language.

Another aspect of literature use was the element of free choice. Free choice of reading materials affected the areas of personal satisfaction and purpose, which also helped to develop a personal sense of enjoyment. It seems apparent, too, that as a reader enjoys reading more and more, he/she will actually spend increased time reading which in turn will make him/her a more proficient reader.

Discussing the literature that was read was shown to be an important element in a literature-based reading program. Research indicated that discussion was an excellent avenue for developing higher level thinking skills and moral awareness.

Sustained silent reading was also shown to be an essential element in a literature-based reading program according to the research. Sustained silent reading seems to be a natural form of practicing reading which will then produce reading growth and improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Reading be viewed as a process that is meaning-based.

2. Literature-based reading programs be planned and organized as the total reading program or as a supplement to a basal program.

3. Literature-based reading programs include:

    a) free choice of reading materials by children
    b) daily time for reading aloud to children
    c) time allowance for in-depth discussion of literature
    d) daily time allowed for sustained silent reading

4. Further reading and research be done to determine the value of other instructional methods that could be incorporated into a literature-based reading program, such as:

    a) teaching skills in a meaningful context
    b) teaching skills as strategies
    c) responding to literature through writing, art, drama, etc.
    e) using literature across the curriculum

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BACKGROUND

A. Author -- Marcia E. Kindy
57154 Westlake Dr.
Middlebury, IN. 46540

B. B.S. Elementary Education, Purdue University, 1970.

C. Thirty-three hours graduate work at I.U.S.B.

D. Two years experience as a Chapter I Remedial Reading Teacher at Middlebury Elementary School.

E. Six years classroom teaching experience:

1. Two years third grade.

2. Four years second grade.

F. The interest in the topic of using children's literature to teach reading, stems from a Children's Literature course which was instructed by Kathy Short at Goshen College.